

Section 4 Transmitting the Return by Modem

Transmitters may send e-file returns over the Public Switched Telephone Network to our Sacramento office.

4.1 Data Communications Subsystem

Asynchronous Communications Specifications

- Line Speeds: 2,400 - 56,000 BPS
- Modems: XMODEM or ZMODEM
- Character Code: No binary fields may be transmitted.
- Record Types: Variable length records only.

Logon Specifications

- Dial FTB in Sacramento at (916) 845-0854 to initiate a transmission session
- FTB will respond with a screen indicating a successful connection. The message on the screen is: **FTB_**
- Enter your Electronic Transmitter Identification Number (ETIN) and password.
- Do not enter a space between your ETIN and password.
- The password is case sensitive; enter it in all capitals.
- If the ETIN and/or password are not valid, or the Transmitter's ETIN is suspended from e-file Program, FTB will disconnect.
- If your ETIN and password are valid, FTB will prompt :

FILE TRANSFER PROTOCOL (FTP) INDICATOR: [X OR Z] __

- X means XMODEM
- Z means ZMODEM
- If neither X or Z is specified, the default is ZMODEM.

Before you can transmit returns, FTB returns all outstanding Acknowledgment Files. After you choose a valid FTP, FTB will respond with:

FTB READY TO SEND ACKNOWLEDGMENT FILE

4.2 Receiving the Acknowledgment (ACK) File

After FTB receives your FTP, one of the following will occur:

- If you experienced difficulty transmitting the previous transmission, FTB will send a communications error ACK record indicating why there was an abnormal end to the transmission;
- If you have no ACK Files from a previous transmission, FTB will transmit a generic substitute acknowledgment record; or
- If an ACK File from a previous transmission is ready, FTB will transmit it to you.

The ACK File identifies which returns FTB accepted, rejected, or identified as duplicates.

Generally FTB creates ACK Files every 30 minutes. If you do not receive your ACK Files within two days or if you receive acknowledgments for returns that you did not transmit in the designated transmission, immediately contact the e-Programs Customer Service Unit at (916) 845-0353 for assistance.

Once you receive the ACK File, match it to the original file transmitted. Any electronically transmitted return, which is not acknowledged by FTB, has NOT been accepted for processing, and must be resubmitted and acknowledged as accepted before it is considered a filed return.

If we reject the same return to you three times, please contact the e-Programs Customer Service Unit.

4.3 Transmitting Returns

California allows the state return to be transmitted independent of the federal return and does not require the federal return be accepted prior to the state return being transmitted. If the federal return is rejected and the state return is accepted, **DO NOT** retransmit the state return to California.

After the ACK File transmission is complete, FTB will send the following message:

ACKNOWLEDGMENT FILE TRANSMISSION COMPLETE - FTB READY TO RECEIVE

Note: Once we send this message, FTB will wait to receive a transmission. If you do not begin transmitting within 60 seconds, FTB will disconnect.

Transmit the return record in the following sequence:

- Transmitter records (TRANA and TRANB), these records identify the Transmitter.
- Tax Return records, including the return (RET), withholding documents (W-2,1099, etc.), schedule (SCH) and all related, form (FRM), Authentication (ATH), statement (STM), and summary (SUM) records.
- Recap record. The RECAP summarizes the transmission.

Repeat this sequence for each batch of returns transmitted in subsequent transmissions.

After transmission of the electronic return file(s) is complete, FTB will send the following message and disconnect:

TRANSMISSION SUCCESSFUL - DISCONNECT FROM FTB - MMDDYYYY-HHMMSS-***&&&**

The above acronyms and symbols have the following meanings:

FTB - Franchise Tax Board

MMDDYYYY - Date

HHMMSS - Time

***** - The ETIN used in the transmission.

&&& -The FTB-generated file sequence number.

4.4 Problem Transmission

If you experienced difficulty transmitting during the previous transmission, FTB will send a Communications Error Acknowledgment Record, which indicates why there was an abnormal end to the transmission.

The Communications Error Acknowledgment Record will be sent if there is an aborted transmission, whether or not other acknowledgment records are ready to be picked up.

Transmissions files cannot have more than 999 electronic returns. If more than 999 returns are ready to be transmitted, they must be sent in separate transmission files.

Resend the entire file for an aborted transmission. The e-file System does not support checkpoint restart capabilities.

Following are the error messages FTB may transmit in the Communications Error Acknowledgment File for aborted transmissions:

- **A RECORD OTHER THAN TRANA RECORD WAS RECEIVED** – The TRANA record must be first.
- **ERROR RECEIVING DATA. COULD BE A LINE PROBLEM**
- **INVALID FILE TRANSFER PROTOCOL INDICATOR. MUST RESPOND WITH “X” OR “Z”.**
- **PROBLEM OCCURRED SENDING ACKNOWLEDGMENT FILE(S): YOU MAY CALL TO HAVE FILE(S) RESET** – Can occur when the Transmitter has begun transmitting records before picking up the ACK File, there is line noise, or the Transmitter's system times out.
- **WRONG LENGTH TRANA RECORD, MUST BE 120 BYTES**

4.5 Layout of a Communications Error Acknowledgment File

Each Communications Error Acknowledgment File FTB sends has a sequence number and is sent in the order of the error. FTB transmits the file before any regular or generic substitute records ACKs.

The layout of a Communications Error Acknowledgment File is as follows:

0120**TRANA9blanksTHIS IS A COMMUNICATIONS ERROR
ACKNOWLEDGMENT FILE45blanks#**

- A total of 74 characters, followed by 45 blanks and the pound (#) sign in the 120th position

0120**TRANB TRANSMISSION XXXXXYYY ON MM/DD/YYYY, HH:MM:SS
WAS UNSUCCESSFUL DUE TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITION:**

- Transmission error message appears here, followed by blanks and a pound (#) sign in the 120th position
 - XXXXX = the ETIN
 - YYY = Transmission Sequence Number

0120**ACK**

- Transmission Error appears here, followed by blanks and a pound (#) sign in the 120th position

0120****RECAP

- 106 blanks followed by pound (#) sign in the 120th position

4.6 File Format - General Description

Format all transmission data in ASCII formatted binary fields. The records must be variable length.

Normally, a transmission session consists of three parts:

1. The communications link must be established using acceptable protocol.
2. The Transmitter will receive the acknowledgment transmission containing information about the previous transmission,
3. The return record transmission may commence. The return record transmission will consist of a series of logical records beginning with the Transmitter records, some number of logical return and ending with a Recap record.

Logical block byte counts must not be present for ASCII transmissions.

Each logical record within a transmission must be preceded by two, four-byte fields. The first four-byte field is for a record byte count. This contains a count of the number of bytes within the logical record, including the four bytes for the counter itself, the Record Sentinel (****) and the Record Terminus Character (#). The second four-byte field will be the start of the record sentinel, which must be four asterisks (****).

Every logical record must have as its last significant byte the Record Terminus Character (#). Provisions have been made to allow for non-significant padding to exist following the Record Terminus Character (i.e., blanks may be added after the Record Terminus Character to fill up a physical block size). This is permitted to accommodate all the different computer systems being used to transmit data.

The end of the logical transmission will be signaled by the literal "RECAP" followed by the Recap data and then the Record Terminus Character (#).

The first records of a transmitted file (the TRANA and TRANB records) contain information regarding the Transmitter and the file format. The records comprising the tax returns being transmitted must follow these records. The last record of a transmitted file (the RECAP record) provides balancing counts of returns.

A tax return will consist of a variable number of variable length records. The formats of the logical record for each page of each form, schedule, etc., are specified in the Record Layouts.

Each logical record should contain all data fields pertaining to an entire form or schedule; or a logical part (i.e., PG01 or PG02 of a form or schedule; or a line of a statement).

The complete tax return must consist of all logical records pertaining to it in the following sequence:

Form 540 Page 1, Form 540 Page 2, Form W-2, Form W-2G, Form 1099-R, California Schedules, California Forms, California Authentication Record, California Statements,

IRS 1040 Return, IRS Schedules, IRS Forms, IRS Statements (if applicable) and California Summary.

All records must appear in the above sequence with the proper control information and the counts of the schedules and forms must balance to the Summary record or the return will be rejected.

The file should be unlabeled (no standard header or trailer records).

The data records of the return set must be in sequence. In multiple page forms, pages that do not contain data may be omitted, or may be present and "blank" (with only the Record ID and field/data items). Exception: a return must always have a PG01. In multiple instances of a form type, the Occurrence Number must be present and in ascending numeric sequence beginning with 01.

The first logical record for a tax return will include the tax period, return type, Declaration Control Number (DCN), and the Return Sequence Number (RSN). A return record consists of Form 540/NR/NRS/2EZ Page 1 and Page 2.

Do not confuse the DCN and the RSN. The DCN must contain the Electronic Filer Identification Number (EFIN) of the electronic filer who prepared or collected the return, even if the Transmitter assigns the DCN as a service to the electronic return preparer.

The RSN is a unique 16-digit number assigned by the Transmitter to each return within a return transmission. The RSN includes the Transmitter's ETIN and the date and sequence for that date of the transmitted return. The RSN consists of the following fields:

- ETIN of the Transmitter (5 numeric);
- Transmitters Use Code, determined by the Transmitter (2 numeric);
- Julian date of the transmission (3 numeric);
- Transmission Sequence Number for the given Julian date (2 numeric); and
- Sequential number assigned to the return (4 numeric).

The second series of records are the Withholding records (W-2, W-2G, 1099-R). The third series of records are the Schedule records. The fourth series of records are the Form records. The fifth series is the Authentication Record. Refer to Section 12 (Record Layouts) for the format of these records.

The sixth series of records are the Statement records. They can only be used when the number of data items exceeds the number that can be contained in the space provided on the printed form. The record layout must note "STMbnn" in the Field Description for fields allowing for the use of statements. If a statement is used, "STMbnn" should be entered for that field in the base return.

The seventh series of records is the IRS 1040 Return. This information is to be transmitted only if the taxpayer is required to file the 1040 with their 540 or 540NR return.

A Summary record will be the final record for each tax return. This record will contain electronic filer identification data and counts of the Forms, Schedules and Statements included in the return.

4.7 File Format - Variable Length

California accepts the transmission of variable length records only. The variable record length option for transmitting tax return records (excluding the TRANA, TRANB and RECAP records) provides for the transmission of only key fields and significant data fields within a return record. Statement and Summary records must be transmitted in a fixed format because data must appear in the correct byte positions and is blank-filled when there is no data.

A "V" in the Record Type field of the initial Transmitter TRANA record indicates the variable format. The data field is preceded by the applicable Field Number shown in the specific record layout. The Field Number is enclosed within square bracket field delimiters ([]).

The beginning of record control information (Byte Count and Start of Record Sentinel) must be at the beginning of the record and the Record Terminus Character must be at the end of the record. The individual data fields need only contain the significant data (i.e. no leading zeroes or trailing spaces). The Summary and Statement records are not keyed to field numbers and must be full-length expanded records but must still be enclosed in field delimiters.

The following three symbols "[", "]" and "#" are reserved as delimiters and may not appear as data characters. The basic record would follow the format below.

nnnn****RECORD ID FIELD[first field number] DATA[next field number]DATA.....#

For variable length records the following data field conventions apply:

- For **signed** and **unsigned** numeric fields, drop leading zeros (except for dates and percentage fields) and leading or trailing blanks. For negative values, the minus sign "-" must be present.
- For **alphanumeric** fields, there cannot be leading blanks. Trailing blanks should also be dropped.
- For fields defined as having **literal** values, only the literal value, including imbedded spaces, will be accepted.